

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of optically scanning a pneumatic tire of a vehicle wheel the method comprising the steps of:
 - rotating the vehicle wheel about a stationary axis;
 - scanning the surface of the pneumatic tire while the wheel is rotating by emitting three light beams ~~at least one light beam~~ from three given positions ~~at least one given position~~ onto the surface of the pneumatic tire forming a ~~at least one~~ light spot in each given position;
~~at least at one given position~~, receiving three beams ~~at least one beam~~ reflected by the surface of the pneumatic tire corresponding to each of the three light beams ~~the~~ ~~at least one light beam~~ for measuring the distance of each of the light spots ~~the~~ ~~at least one light spot~~ relative to a reference position;
 - measuring a rotary angle position of the vehicle wheel associating with the measured distances ~~distance~~; and
 - determining dimensions and positions of the pneumatic tire or constituent parts of the pneumatic tire based on the measured distances of the three light spots ~~at least one light spot~~ and the associated rotary angle position of the vehicle;
 - wherein one of the light beams scans the tire tread surface, and the other two of the light beams scans the tire side walls at the inside and the outside of the wheel.
2. Cancelled.
3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the profile depth and/or irregular tire wear are ascertained when scanning the tread surface.

4. (Original) The method according to one of claim 3, wherein the tread surface of the pneumatic tire is scanned to determine unacceptable conicity.

5. Cancelled.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 [[5]] further comprising the step of detecting the tire fit on the tire rim and/or indentations and/or bulges at one or both tire side walls of the wheel, based on the respective directions of ~~the~~ at least one of the emitted light beams ~~beam~~ and ~~the~~ at least one of the reflected beams ~~beam~~.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for optically scanning a pneumatic tire of a vehicle wheel that is rotatably mounted on a measuring shaft of a wheel balancing machine, comprising:

three sensor devices, each comprising a at least one light source that emits a light beam configured to scan the surface of the pneumatic tire while the wheel is rotating to form at least one light spot on the tire surface, and[[;]] a receiver movable together with the light source, and wherein the receiver is configured to receive a beam reflected by the surface of the pneumatic tire while the wheel is rotating, and produce a signal based on the receiving position of the reflected beam at the receiver, and wherein each ~~the~~ light source and corresponding ~~the~~ receiver are movable together into given positions relative to the measuring shaft for measuring the distance of the at least one light spot relative to a reference position;

a rotary angle sensor, coupled to the measuring shaft, for generating a rotary angle associated associating with the at least one light spot of each sensor based on the rotation of the measuring shaft and the vehicle wheel; and

a computer-aided evaluation device, coupled to the rotary angle sensor and the receivers receiver, for ascertaining dimensions and positions of the pneumatic tire or constituent parts of the pneumatic tire based on the measured distance of the at least one light spot of each sensor and the associated rotary angle position of the rotating vehicle wheel;

wherein one of the sensor devices is configured to scan the tire tread surface, and the other two of the sensor devices are configured to scan the tire side walls at the inside and the outside of the wheel, and the sensor devices are attached to movable components of a wheel balancing machine.

8. Cancelled.

9. (Currently Amended) A method using three one or more light beams for optically scanning a pneumatic tire of a vehicle wheel that is rotatably mounted to a stationary axis, in which a light beam is directed from each of three given positions at least one given position on to the surface of the pneumatic tire while the wheel is rotating, and an associated reflected beam is received at each of the three given positions least one given position, wherein dimensions and positions of the pneumatic tire or constituent parts of the pneumatic tire are ascertained based on the directions of the emitted light beams beam and the reflected beams; beam wherein one of the light beams scans the tire tread surface, and the other two of the light beams scans the tire side walls at the inside and the outside of the wheel.